DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 101 820 JC 750 178

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TITLE Faculty Survey on the "Free Hour." Research Study No. 75-3.
INSTITUTION Los Angeles City Coll., Calif.
REPORT NO PS-75-3
PUB DATE Jan 75
NOTE 11p.

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.76 HC-$1.58 PLUS POSTAGE
DESCRIPTORS Cocurricular Activities; *Junior Colleges; *Program Evaluation; *Released Time; *School Schedules; School Surveys; *Teacher Attitudes; Teacher Participation
IDENTIFIERS *Los Angeles City College

ABSTRACT

This study attempted to assess use of the campus "free hour" (Tuesday, 12-1) inaugurated in the fall 1974 semester. During the "free hour," classes were not scheduled so that various campus clubs, committees, and special presentations could be scheduled without conflicting with classes. A brief questionnaire was sent to members of the day faculty; 145 faculty members, about 40 percent of the total, responded. Thirty-eight (26 percent) of the respondents indicated that they had participated in some way during the semester. The most common activities listed were meetings--departmental, committee, staff, and administrative. Fifteen faculty members indicated that they had sponsored club or other student activities. A question asking whether or not the respondent favored discontinuing the free hour evoked some strong statements on both sides of the question. "Yes" responses outnumbered "No" responses by more than two to one. The major objection to the free hour was clearly the scheduling of classes beginning at 7:45 a.m. with resulting student tardiness, loss of instruction time, and lowered enrollments. Of those supporting the free hour, many felt that it had not been given an adequate test, that the time of day was not the best, and that it was not given enough publicity. It was recommended that the "free hour" be re-evaluated at the close of fall 1975. (Author/AH)

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LOS ANGELES CITY COLLEGE

"FACULTY SURVEY ON THE 'FREE HOUR'"

Research Study #75-3

Ben K. Gold
Research Office
January, 1975

JC 750 178

"FACULTY SURVEY ON THE 'FREE HOUR'"

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

In the Fall, 1974 the hour of 12:00 noon to 1:00 p.m. on Tuesday was designated as a campus "free hour," i.e., classes were not to be scheduled at that hour, permitting various campus clubs, committees, special presentations, etc. to be scheduled without conflicting with classes. This study, made at the request of the Office of Instruction, attempts to assess the use made of this "free hour" by means of a questionnaire survey of the faculty.

PROCEDURE OF THE STUDY

A brief questionnaire (copy appended) was prepared and submitted to the day faculty through their boxes in the faculty mailroom. Questionnaires were returned to a box provided in the mailroom. They were distributed January 13, 1975, collected January 20, and tallied and analyzed as described in the next section.

FINDINGS

Questionnaires were returned by 145 faculty members, about 40% of the total day faculty. The following tables summarize the responses.

TABLE 1

Have you, as a faculty member, participated in any activities during the campus free hour in conjunction with your regular assignment?

TABLE 1 (continued)

yes	22	(15%)
no	114	(79%)
no response	9	(6%)
	145	(100%)

In what way?

(yes)	department meetings	12
	attended campus events.....	4
	office hours, counseling students.....	3
	administrative meetings.....	2
	made presentations to groups.....	2
		23*
(no)	was not free at that hour.....	3
	off-campus on Tuesdays.....	1
	never asked or invited.....	1
		5
(no response)	able to attend events.....	1

TABLE 2

Have you, as a faculty member, participated in any activities during the campus free hour as a club sponsor?

yes	15	(10%)
no	106	(73%)
no response	24	(17%)
	145	(100%)

Which clubs?

(yes) Club	Average weekly no. of students
Police	25
LACC Nat'l. Orgination of Women.....	NS
A.W.A.R.E.	20-75
Asian Students Alliance.....	15-30
Radiologic Tech. Society.....	40
Alethians, IDSS	20-30
Hillel Council.....	NS
Student Council	30
Vet. Alliance, Bowling Club.....	20-12
Publ. Rel. St. Soc. Officers.....	2-4
Sigma Tau Sigma (once a year)	NS
Assoc. Eng'rs. & Arch.....	20
Assoc. Engineers	12
Philosophy forum (1 lecture).....	small
(not this semester).....	----

* differing totals indicate multiple responses

TABLE 3

Have you, as a faculty member, participated in any activities during the campus free hour in any other way?

yes	19	(13%)
no	95	(66%)
no response	31	(21%)
	145	(100%)

Describe briefly

committee meetings 6
counseling students..... 4
attending events..... 4
department meetings..... 2
recording Music 89..... 1
Women's Center activities..... 1
many activities..... 1

A count was made of the number of respondents who answered yes to one or more of the first three questions. By this count, a total of 38 (26% of 145) participated in at least one activity of some kind during the free hour.

TABLE 4

Do you favor discontinuing the campus free hour?

yes	93	(64%)
no	40	(28%)
no response	12	(8%)
	145	(100%)

Although the word discontinuing was underlined, apparently the wording of the question caused some confusion. Seven responses were changed (4 no to yes, 1 yes to no, 1 no response to yes, one no response to no) as stated comments clearly indicated an error in marking. Since a total of 72 respondents offered written comments, we estimate that about 10% of the respondents marked the question incorrectly.

Space was provided for comments, and also a line for signature identification (marked optional). The follcwing summarizes the number making comments and indicating their name:

favor discontinuing?	wrote comments? yes	wrote comments? no	wrote comments? total
yes	42	51	93
no	22	18	40
no response	8	4	12
total	72	73	145

favor discontinuing?	was name signed? yes	was name signed? no	was name signed? total
yes	40	53	93
no	31	9	40
no response	7	5	12
total	78	67	145

wrote comments?	was name signed? yes	was name signed? no	was name signed? total
yes	52	20	72
no	26	47	73
total	78	67	145

Comments offered by the 72 respondents were read and subjectively categorized as indicated below. Examples (sometimes abbreviated) are indicated in parentheses.

Comments

(42 respondents who answered yes)

caused scheduling problems 28
- 7:45 a.m. hour unsatisfactory 17
  (students always late; 8:10 one day, 7:45 the next -- unreasonable; 7:45 hour loses more than any activity could balance; -- amounts to an infernal humbug!)
- general scheduling complaints 10
  (ruins the college schedule; problem in scheduling far outweigh any advantages; return to same schedule would be appreciated; schedule is awkward)
- causes conflicts with daily (5 hour) classes..... 2

Comments (continued)

opposed to idea of free hour 8
(do not need a high school homeroom hour; whole idea was poorly conceived; impractical to begin with; its dumb)

not appropriate for our students 8
(a college of commuting and working students -- morning students leave at noon to work -- afternoon students arrive late; students too transient -- not interested in group, large or small, meeting; students against it 10-1 before it was put in)

detrimental to instruction 3
(unfair to offer less instructional time; cuts into available instructional time)

enrollment suffers 3
(has hurt morning enrollment; lowers enrollment)

haven't seen evidence of its value 3
(have seen no positive results; did not prove useful)

facilities inadequate 3
(no place available for speakers)

not necessary 2
(activities could be worked in at other times)

wasn't aware of it 1

(22 respondents who answered no)

should have been scheduled at different time 9

different hour 3
(change to 11-12 with classes at 8:00-9:30, 9:30-11:00, 12:00-1:30, 1:30-3:00; students just leave after their last class - make it 11-12)

different day 3
(T Th is bad; could participate on M or F but not T)

add another hour 3
(should be T & Th; use both T & Th)

approve idea of free hour 6
(need it to establish sense of community; free hour is a must; needed to broaden students cultural and aesthetic personalities; idea is good)

need more time to evaluate 3
(can't be an instant success -- give it time; maybe the time is wrong, not the concept)

don't permit any classes during free hour 3

criticisms of questionnaire..... 2
(why the negative wording; why not other alternative answers)

should be greater input 1

use for faculty meetings now held 2:30-5:00..... 1

schedule 12 Daily class at 12 MTTHF and 1 F..... 1

needs more publicity..... 1

did not know free hour existed 1

Comments (continued)

(8 respondents who did not answer yes or not)

no interest (couldn't care less; doesn't effect me)	4
have no free hour	2
favor only if it does not affect operation	2

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study has attempted to assess use of the campus "free hour" (Tuesday 12-1) inaugurated in the Fall, 1974 semester. The method used was a questionnaire survey of the day faculty.

Completed questionnaires were returned by 145 faculty members, about 40% of the total.

Slightly over one fourth of the respondents (38) indicated that they had participated in free hour activities in some way during the semester. Most common activities were meetings -- departmental, committees, staff, administrative. Fifteen faculty indicated they sponsored club or other activities, although several of these indicated that meetings were not held weekly.

A question asking whether or not the respondent favored discontinuing the free hour evoked some strong statements on both sides of the question. "Yes" responses outnumbered "No" responses by more than two to one. About half of each group offered written comments. Over three fourths of those answering "No" signed their name to the questionnaire as opposed to less than half of those answering "Yes." Implications of this observation are not clear, but the difference is statistically significant.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS (continued)

Major objection to the free hour was clearly the scheduling of classes beginning at 7:45 a.m., with resulting student tardiness, loss of instruction time and lowered enrollments. Some opposed it on principle, others felt the nature of L.A.C.C. student body (many working or transient) made it impractical or unwise.

Of those supporting the free hour, many felt that it has not been given an adequate test, that the time was probably not the best, that it had not been given enough publicity, and that not all departments observed the free hour.

It appears, then, that arguments for both sides of the question can be drawn from the findings of this survey. For example:

(1) arguments in favor of discontinuing the free hour
   (a) only 38 faculty members reported participating in any way in Fall 1974; although this number is one fourth the number of respondents, it represents only about 1 in ten faculty members.
   (b) respondents to the questionnaire favored discontinuing the free hour by more than two to one.
   (c) the Fall, 1974 experience indicated loss of instructional time and loss of enrollments.

(2) arguments in favor of continuing the free hour
   (a) no innovation such as this can be effectively evaluated in such a short time
   (b) if the 7:45 starting time were eliminated, much of the objection would be removed
   (c) although the majority of respondents favored discontinuing the free hour, the actual number is only about one fourth of the total faculty

Other arguments on both sides could be made, but since arguments on neither side seem to be overwhelming, the following recommendation is offered.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that the "free hour" be continued through the Fall, 1975 semester with evaluation to be made at the close of that semester. In addition it is recommended that:

(1) the hour be changed to 11 Tuesday, with four seventy-five minute blocks for classes scheduled at 8:10-9:25, 9:45-11:00, 12:10-1:25, 1:45-3:00

(2) all departments be requested to honor the free hour

(3) five hour classes at noon be held to a minimum; if necessary to schedule, omit Tuesday and schedule 12-2 on Friday

(4) the free hour be publicized widely and all members of the campus community be urged to participate

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UNIVERSITY OF CALIF.
LOS ANGELES
MAR 28 1975
CLEARINGHOUSE FOR
JUNIOR COLLEGE
INFORMATION

January 13, 1975

TO: L.A.C.C. Faculty
FROM: Ben K. Gold
SUBJECT: CAMPUS FREE HOUR SURVEY

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The Research Office has been asked to survey the faculty in regard to the Campus Free Hour (Tuesday 12-1). It obviously causes some scheduling problems, and the question has been raised as to whether the hour is being used sufficiently to merit its continuance. To help us provide an answer to this question, would you please answer the following questions and place the completed sheet in the box provided in the mailroom. Please respond promptly, no later than January 20.

Have you, as a faculty member, participated in any activities during the campus free hour:

1. in conjunction with your regular assignment? Yes____ No____
   if yes, please describe briefly in what way and how frequently. _____
   _____
   _____
2. as a club sponsor? Yes____ No____
   if yes, which club(s) _____
   _____
   _____
   approximate average number of students attending weekly _____.
3. in any other way? Yes____ No____
   if yes, please describe briefly _____
   _____
   _____

Do you favor discontinuing the campus free hour? Yes____ No____

Comments (use back if desired) _____
_____
_____
_____
_____
_____

Name _____ (optional)